



56.

S. Deger-Jalkotzy

Elateia-Alonaki. The Mycenaean and Early Iron Age Pottery and the History of the Cemetery

Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies 47, 2004, 187–188

© Institute of Classical Studies, University of London
mit freundlicher Genehmigung / with kind permission

Dieses Dokument darf ausschließlich für wissenschaftliche Zwecke genutzt werden (Lizenz CC BY-NC-ND), gewerbliche Nutzung wird urheberrechtlich verfolgt.

This document is for scientific use only (license CC BY-NC-ND), commercial use of copyrighted material will be prosecuted.

BICS 2004

BULLETIN OF THE INSTITUTE OF CLASSICAL STUDIES

VOLUME 47

**INSTITUTE OF CLASSICAL STUDIES
SCHOOL OF ADVANCED STUDY, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON**

The cover shows a female pantomime mask, 1st-2nd century AD. Louvre CA 2299.
Photo, Eric Handley.

ISSN 0076-0730

© Institute of Classical Studies
School of Advanced Study, University of London 2004

Published by the Institute of Classical Studies
School of Advanced Study, University of London
Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher.

The right of the contributors to be identified as the authors of the articles published here has been asserted by them in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Designed and computer typeset at the Institute of Classical Studies

Printed by Remous Limited, Milborne Port, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 5EP

19th March 2003

SPECIAL ELATEIA DAY

Elateia–Alonaki: The Mycenaean and Early Iron Age Pottery and the History of the Cemetery¹

Sigrid Deger-Jalkotzy

No less than 640 complete or reconstructed vases and several thousands of pottery fragments found in the chamber-tombs of Elateia-Alonaki can be assigned to the Mycenaean and Early Iron Age periods. They testify to the fact that the cemetery was in use during a remarkably long stretch of time, from LH IIIA1 to Middle Geometric, i.e. from the early 14th to the late 9th centuries BC. Archaic and Classical finds have so far not been attested.

Vases of LH IIIA1 were found on the chamber floors and pits of 7 tombs. LH IIIA1 sherds were also found in the dromos fills of several other tombs. However, they cannot be relied upon for chronological purposes since dromos fills may always be suspected of including intrusive material.

During LH IIIA2-III B Early the number of tombs reached the number of 23, increasing to possibly 30 in the course of LH IIIB Middle and Late. During LH IIIA and IIIB the region of Elateia was firmly established in the cultural developments of the so-called Mycenaean *koiné*. The pottery appears to have been influenced by the centres of Thessaly and Boeotia rather than by those of the Argolid. Certain features were moreover shared with the pottery of Attica, as well as of Achaia. These peculiarities may have been the result of local predilections, as well as of the geopolitical situation of Elateia at the so-called 'Great Isthmus Corridor Route'

500 out of the above-mentioned 640 vases from Elateia date to the periods from LH IIIC through Middle Geometric. Pottery of LH IIIC Early and Developed is not well represented. It was only found in 11 or 12 tombs. It therefore seems possible that Elateia, too, was affected by the general turbulence at the end of the 13th century BC. However, in the absence of settlement evidence it is difficult to decide upon this issue.

Stylistically the local LH IIIB tradition was continued in LH IIIC Early, but influences from Perati, Euboea, Thessaly and Skyros make themselves felt. Clearly the communications along the 'Great Corridor Route' had not come to a close after the fall of the palaces.

By LH IIIC Advanced Elateia reached its pinnacle of achievements. Pottery imports and other finds point to contacts with Thessaly, Achaia, with the Argolid, Attica, the Cyclades, and with Crete. Far distance relationships are indicated by the finds of amber beads and certain bronze objects. Until the Early Protogeometric period the majority of the 91 tombs excavated so far were in use. The number of skeletal remains suggests a sharp increase of

¹ Between 1988 and 1991, 69 tombs were jointly excavated at Elateia-Alonaki by the Greek-Austrian excavations of the 14th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities at Lamia, and the Institute of Ancient History of the University of Salzburg (Directors: Dr. Phanouria Dakoronia and Prof. Dr. Sigrid Deger-Jalkotzy). 22 tombs had been excavated earlier (1985-1987) by the Ephorate of Lamia. Our report on the LH IIIA1 – LH IIIC Early pottery has profited greatly from the doctoral thesis of Anna Baechele, 'Mykenische Keramik des 14. bis 12. Jhdts. v. Chr. aus der Nekropole von Elateia-Alonaki' (University of Salzburg, 2003). The use of the cemetery during the Hellenistic and Roman periods has been treated by G. Zachos, 'Elateia. Ellenistiki kai Romaiki Periodos' (Doctoral thesis, University of Kephallonia, 1997).

population, particularly during LH IIIC Late and sub-Mycenaean. Cremation, too, was practised in a few cases. During LH III C Advanced and Late a regional pottery style emerged in its own right, blending pottery elements from Thessaly, Skyros and Achaia into the local tradition. These vases are not easily classified nor dated.

Among the rich burial gifts a wealth of metal objects stands out, as Phanouria Dakoronia has demonstrated. As far as chronology is concerned, bronze shield-rings decorated with impressed dots already occurred in LH III C Late contexts, while long dress pins with swellings did not appear before sub-Mycenaean. During the latter period two new elements were introduced at Elateia, the first pairs of pins with globular heads and handmade pottery. However, both only became popular in Early Protogeometric.

Quite differently from the advanced character of the metal finds, sub-Mycenaean and Protogeometric pottery remained conservative. Vases of these periods tenaciously retained stylistic elements of the local late Mycenaean tradition. A certain cultural conservatism is also testified to by the fact that during the sub-Mycenaean, Protogeometric and sub-Protogeometric (Early Geometric) periods new tombs were cut into the rock of the Alonaki hill. They still adhered to the idea of the rock-chamber tomb, even if their shapes no longer followed the canonical layout of the Mycenaean tombs.

Novel pottery features of the Protogeometric era were large amphorae of a height of 45 cm and more. At least eight of them are decorated with compass-drawn concentric circles. Vases of the same kind have been found at the neighbouring sites of Agnadi and Kalapodi, but also in Thessaly and Macedonia, at Lefkandi, in Lemnos and at Troy. Contacts with the 'Protogeometric *koiné*' of Thessaly, Euboea and the Cyclades are attested by imported vases from Thessaly and Lefkandi.

Elateia's era of prosperity was confined to the transition from the Bronze Age to Early Protogeometric. After that the number of tombs decreased, and by the end of the 10th century BC most tombs were abandoned. Pottery found in the few tombs that continued to be used in the 9th century first followed the sub-Protogeometric style of Thessaly. Middle Geometric vases show an affinity to Boeotian pottery. The last tombs of Elateia were abandoned at the end of the 9th century BC.